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THE

UNITARIAN CHURCH TEMPERANCE SOCIETY

ITS

CONSTITUTION

AND

METHODS OF WORK

PREPARED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, JANUARY, 1887

BOSTON

PRESS OF GEO. H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET

1887

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THE UNITARIAN CHURCH TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

The large measure of interest taken in the subject of temperance at the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, held at Saratoga, N.Y., Sept. 20–24, 1886, led to the organization of the Unitarian Church Temperance Society, and the adoption of the following Constitution : —

I. The name of this organization shall be "The Unitarian Church Temperance Society."

II. The purpose of this Society shall be to work for the cause of temperance in whatever ways may seem to it wise and right; to study the social problems of poverty, crime, and disease in their relation to the use of intoxicating drinks, and to diffuse whatever knowledge may be gained; to discuss methods of temperance reform; to devise and, so far as possible, to execute plans for practical reform; to exert, by its meetings and by its membership, such influence for good as by the grace of God it may possess.

III. This Society shall be composed of such Branch Societies as may be formed, in sympathy with the above-named purpose, either in churches or Sunday-schools.

IV. The regular meetings of this Society shall be held once in two years, in connection with the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches; and each Branch Society shall be represented at such meetings by two delegates. Special meetings may be called by the Executive Board.

V. The officers of this Society shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, who shall also be Treasurer, and nine Directors, who, together with the other officers, shall constitute the Executive Board.

In addition to the usual duties of such officers, the Executive Board shall prepare and recommend plans for the organization and work of the Branch Societies.

VI. The office of the Central Society shall be simply advisory to the Branch Societies; and no vote passed shall be binding upon, or in any way interfere with, the work of these Branch Societies.

VII. This Constitution may be amended by a majority vote of the delegates present at any regular meeting, provided notice of the proposed amendment be sent to all the Branch Societies two months previous to such meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

In discharge of their duty, the Executive Board submit the following suggestions and recommendations: —

Specific organization will, we feel sure, lead to the best results, and most effectually stimulate temperance activity. The Directors have received notice, up to present writing, of twenty Branch Societies already formed. (See Note A.)

Where such organization is not practicable, the following methods of work are suggested: —

The church, parish, or Sunday-school may appoint a temperance committee, whose duty it shall be to awaken temperance sentiment, and direct definite work adapted to the place and circumstances. Such work may be undertaken by any other existing organization, as the Unity Club, Wadsworth Club, Ladies' Societies.

Co-operate with other churches and organizations to develop temperance sentiment and to make the deepest and widest impression upon your community.

Monthly or quarterly union meetings of the different churches are recommended. It is desirable that such meetings should, for the evening on which they are held, take the place of regular evening services.

A personal habit and example of total abstinence from alcoholic liquors as a beverage is always to be commended, and is especially desirable on the part of ministers, parents, and teachers. Attention is called to the following resolution adopted by the National Conference of 1882: —

Resolved, That the unutterable evils continually wrought by intemperance, the easy descent from moderate to immoderate drinking, and the moral wrecks strewn along that downward path, call upon Christians and patriots to practise and advocate abstinence from the use of all intoxicating liquors as a beverage.

Provision should be made for teaching, in a proper manner and with due regard to the importance of the subject, the principles of temperance in our Sunday-schools. For this purpose, the use of devotional services, with hymns and class lessons, is desirable.

Sunday-school workers and others should be familiar with the various books used in the public schools for the purpose of teaching the subject of Physiology with special reference to the effect of alcohol and narcotics upon the human system, and all temperance workers should be watchful to see that the laws relative to temperance education are faithfully and wisely carried out by school officers and teachers.

Discussion of the principles and methods of temperance work by the local conferences, following, in this respect, the example of the National Conference, is desirable. Special assignments for carefully prepared papers should be sought.

As a means of stimulating public interest in the work, it is found beneficial to carefully prepare reports of temperance meetings and activities for the local press. What is called "press work" is one of the distinct methods of the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

Branch Societies are requested to report to the Secretary of the central organization (see names of the Executive Board) full accounts of their organization, membership, methods of work, their degree of success, and chief hindrances.

Evidence is accumulating that the use of tobacco, especially by boys, is productive of great injury, several States having legislated against the sale of tobacco to minors under sixteen years of age. A study of the evils of the use of tobacco and narcotics, and a personal example of abstinence, especially on the part of clergymen, parents, and teachers, are urged.

Attention is invited to the publications of the "White Cross" movement in behalf of social purity, as having the highest claim to our consideration for its own sake, and as

having intimate connection with the subject of temperance. (See Note B.)

WHAT A CHURCH TEMPERANCE SOCIETY CAN DO.

Increase and strengthen your own membership by holding regular or occasional public meetings, thus exerting an increasing influence upon the community by simply "being."

You can educate your members and encourage them to individual effort, urge the value of personal influence, teach personal responsibility, and discover the special needs of your own community.

A few well-conducted meetings will do more good than many poor ones. Do not be disturbed about "things to do." Create public opinion, change wrong social customs; support the laws and call for better; and whenever there is anything to do in the way of raising the fallen, guarding the tempted, or removing the sources and causes of temptation, be ready and watchful.

So far as possible, offer substitutes for the saloons in the way of reading-rooms, coffee-houses, temperance restaurants, public ice-water barrels in summer time, etc.

Under the banner of temperance, other kinds of work may be done. Teach whatever duties rest upon the citizen in regard to social purity and removal of vice. There is work enough, general or special, for our societies to do, if we are earnest, patient, and watchful.

For juvenile societies, the answer to the question, What can we do? is much the same as the foregoing, modified to meet children's needs. *Simple membership means much.* "On Honor" and "For their sake" are good mottoes, far-reaching. Meetings are necessary; and the more thought given to making them really good, the better.

Why not unite some benevolent work with every juvenile temperance society? There are families enough needing help, where intemperance has been the cause of the trouble; and such a work, carried out, will serve a twofold purpose. This has been tried with marked success. The boys are

interested in supplying the winter's coal, and the girls in getting clothes for some of the children. It is done under wise advisers and only good results. They plan a fair or a lecture to get means for such work,— temperance work; for intemperance has been the cause of the poverty and misery they seek to relieve, and the helpers are learning by actual knowledge of it the evil of drink. Yes, there are ways enough to utilize all the self-sacrificing spirit and enthusiasm developed under the temperance flag. With temperance work as the central purpose, because so vital to our civilization, many other things may be undertaken, which, directly or indirectly, will prove to be temperance work, so that our societies will be "True Helpers."

WHAT TO DO AT MEETINGS.

1. A brief religious service, Scripture reading, prayer, singing. Special readings from temperance literature. Special music by choir or children. The poetry of heroism and humanity and faith. Let the religious motive be supreme,— the kingdom of God.

2. Addresses, lectures, discussion. Utilize home talent; interest the members in preparing brief statements of personal experience or conviction, and in writing papers upon different points of the temperance question. Arrange debates, welcoming both sides in the discussion. For subjects of instruction, take Temperance Laws, as they are, as they ought to be, Methods of Temperance Reform, The Evils of Intemperance, The History of the Temperance Movement, etc., Reports from the Associated Charities, Prison Statistics, Alcohol in Society, etc.

3. Working plans. Have the committee report upon any special needs or opportunities in your community,— Rescue Work, Prevention, Substituting Amusements, etc.

4. For the children, instruction in the well-established facts in regard to Alcohol, its effect upon the human body and mind. This also for adults. Facts in regard to the

evils of intemperance, the dangers of the drinking habit, and in regard to the harm done to society as well as to the individual.

Use charts, diagrams, pictures. Perform simple experiments to illustrate the action of alcohol upon food, etc. Consult Miss Coleman's Manual (National Temperance Society, New York) for lessons, illustrations, experiments, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union for similar helps, and among others a box of materials, etc., for experiments. Consult also "Band of Hope Lesson Manual," Women's Christian Temperance Union, 161 La Salle Street, Chicago. Object lessons. Do much by asking questions. Read a paragraph, and then question.

A Temperance Concert, with special recitations, readings, songs, etc. Some Sunday-schools have frequent Sunday-school concerts. Occasionally make the subject "Temperance." Do this also in the regular course of Sunday-school services.

At each meeting, a penny collection for Temperance Charitable Work. Reports in regard to such work. Plans for future helpfulness. At each meeting, the roll-call, and perhaps a small fine for absence. A call for new members also. Give special attention to the singing and religious exercises, having a chorister and choir of older scholars. The more the members themselves can do, the better. Have officers, committees, and helpers chosen by the children themselves from their own number; but let the President or Leader be the minister of the parish or some one of experience.

NOTE A.

The following form of organization is submitted for the consideration of those forming Branch Societies: —

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE 1. NAME.— The name of this Society shall be

ART. 2. The above-named Society shall be a branch of the Unitarian Church Temperance Society.

ART. 3. PURPOSE.— The purpose of this union shall be to work for the cause of temperance in whatever ways may seem to it wise and right; to study the social problems of poverty, crime, and disease in their relation to the use of intoxicating drinks, and to diffuse whatever knowledge may be gained; to discuss methods of temperance reform; to devise and, so far as possible, to execute plans for practical reform, such as coffee-rooms, reading-rooms, etc., and to exert by its meetings and by its membership such influence for good as by the grace of God it may possess.

ART. 4. MEMBERSHIP.— Either of the following forms may be used. Any person may become a member of this Society by signing either of these declarations: —

DECLARATION A.

I recognize my duty to exert myself for the suppression of intemperance, and, as a member of the Society, will endeavor, by example and precept, to promote its objects; and, in furtherance of this, I hereby agree to abstain from all intoxicating drinks as beverages, including wine, beer, and cider.

This pledge of total abstinence is to bind only so long as I retain my card of membership in this Society.

DECLARATION B.

I recognize my duty to be always temperate myself, and to do what I can to keep others from intemperance. Without binding myself to total abstinence, I engage, as a member of this union, to be watchful of the influence of my example over others, and to discourage in all ways that commend themselves to my judgment and my conscience such drinking usages as are plainly at variance with the interest of good morals.

This engagement is to bind only so long as I retain my card of membership in this Society.

(This form is based upon that of the Episcopal Church Temperance Society.)

For children under sixteen years of age, the declaration may be: —

DECLARATION.

I do faithfully promise that I will not drink any wine, beer, cider, or other alcoholic drinks, except as a medicine, so long as I retain this card of membership.

It is thought advisable by many to require the consent of parents or guardians before admitting children to membership. Such consent may read,—

We fully consent to our children (names and ages to be given) being enrolled in the Juvenile Branch of —— Temperance Union; and we hereby undertake to assist them in keeping their promises of abstinence from all intoxicating liquors as beverages.

This is the form of "The True Helpers" card of membership.

A society organized in connection with the First Congregational Church at Littleton, Mass., states its purpose, and provides for membership by articles in this form: —

The purpose of this Union shall be to strengthen each other, and to help and encourage others in *self-control*, with reference to vicious, hurtful, selfish, or luxurious habits; to do what we can in our community to lessen and prevent the evils that come from intoxicating drinks; and to elevate and maintain the standard of purity, virtue, and happiness.

The foregoing purpose of our Union shall be written in a book, with the words: "We, whose names are subscribed, unite for the purpose set forth in the above article; and, as a means of promoting this object, those of us who add the letter A to our names agree to abstain, unless we give notice of withdrawal to the secretary, from the use of intoxicating liquors as beverages; and those who add the letter T agree to abstain, on the same terms, from the use of tobacco."

This language was chosen for the purpose of including both the "White Cross" and temperance principles in one organization.

NOTE.— Some may prefer not to use cards of membership, but open their Society to all who are in sympathy with the general purpose expressed in the constitution, using special pledges of total abstinence, for instance, for those willing to forward the work in this way, but not as conditions of membership. Some prefer pledges for six months or a year, with special opportunity for renewal.

The membership may include both adults and children, or there may be a separate society for children.

ART. 5. OFFICERS.— The officers of this Society shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, who shall also be Treasurer, and five Directors, who, together with the other officers, shall constitute the Executive Board, which shall have full charge of all the interests of the Society.

ART. 6. MEETINGS.— The annual meeting shall be held on the day . The ordinary meetings shall be held by appointment of the Executive Board.

ART. 7. This Constitution may be amended by a majority vote of any annual meeting.

Where pledges limited in respect to time are used, and, indeed, in all cases, great care should be taken to instil the idea that the principles of temperance are of perpetual obligation. The withdrawal of a card cannot avoid the duty of temperate living.

NOTE B.

Temperance workers may refer to the following publications by way of helps. Many others may be found. Channing's "Address on Temperance," American Unitarian Association; "Temperance Work in

Unitarian Churches," by Christopher R. Eliot, sent free on application. Forms of Declaration, Juvenile Membership Cards (illuminated, "The True Helpers"), and Parents' Consent Papers may be procured of Rev. J. L. Marsh, Winchester, or the American Unitarian Association. The School Text-books in your own town: "Health Primer," price 30 cents; "Hygiene for Young People," price 50 cents; "Hygienic Physiology," price $1.00, published by A. S. Barnes & Co., New York and Chicago. "Temperance Teachings of Science," by A. B. Palmer, M.D., Professor of Medicine and Surgery, University of Michigan, price 50 cents. "The Foundation of Death": A Study of the Drink Question, by Alex Gustafson, D. C. Heath & Co., Boston, price $1.50. The White Cross Series of Tracts, E. P. Dutton & Co., 31 West 23d Street, New York, price 3 cents each; The Philanthropist Series of Tracts, address The Philanthropist, Box 2554, New York City. Publications of the National Temperance Society, 58 Reade Street, New York City. A list of publications will be sent on application to their address. Publications of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Services and class lessons are in course of preparation by the Executive Board of the Unitarian Church Temperance Society.

NOTE C.

In view of the fact that the prosecution of the work of the Unitarian Church Temperance Society will require the expenditure of money, an annual contribution is invited from Branch Societies and all organizations or persons who may be pleased to aid the work. Gifts should be forwarded to the Secretary and Treasurer.

(Feb. 1891, 20,000)

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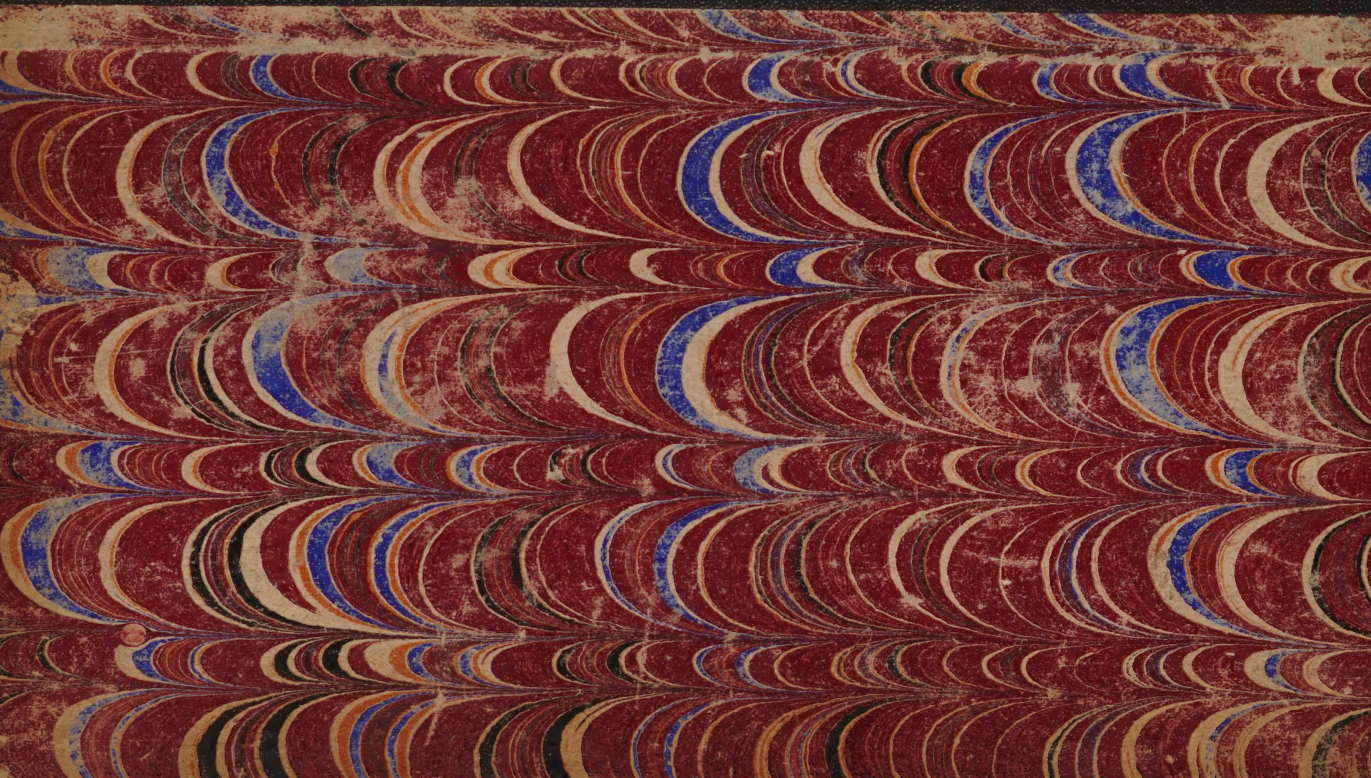
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